

Feds charge 3 N.Y. men in election race attacks

NEW YORK (AP) — Three men, riled by Barack Obama's victory, spent election night hunting down Black people to beat up and yelling insults about the president-elect, federal prosecutors said recently.

The men beat a Liberian immigrant teen, pushed a Black man to the ground and drove their car over a White

man they thought was Black, according to the indictment.

Ralph Nicoletti, 18, Michael Contreras, 18, and Brian Carranza, 21, were arrested recently.

All three pleaded not guilty to charges of conspiracy to interfere with voting rights.

"Violence and intimidation aimed at interfering with

the constitutional rights of every citizen, including the right to vote, will not be tolerated," U.S. Attorney Benton Campbell said in a statement.

A fourth defendant was expected to separately plead guilty to unspecified charges, according to law enforcement officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity be-

cause the plea deal had not been made public.

Nicoletti was part of a vigilante crew whose "primary purpose is to defend its members in inter-neighborhood disputes, some of which have resulted in significant violence," the indictment said.

Nicoletti and Contreras were held without bail, and

Carranza was released on \$200,000 bond. Nicoletti and Carranza are White; Contreras is Hispanic. Their lawyers left court without speaking to reporters.

Before the rampage on Nov. 4, the men had gathered at a makeshift clubhouse in their Staten Island neighborhood, where they monitored the election results on the Internet.

Prosecutors said in court papers that shortly after learning of Obama's victory, making him the nation's first Black president, they "decided to find African-Americans to assault in retaliation for an African-American winning the election."

Nicoletti drove the group to a Black neighborhood, where they stopped Ali Kamara and beat him with a metal pipe and retractable police baton, prosecutors said. They later pushed a Black man to the ground, demanded a Hispanic man

tell them how he voted and "yelled profanities about Obama as they drove past an Election Night gathering of African-Americans at a hair salon," the court papers said.

Finally, the defendants used their car to run over a White man, Ronald Forte, who they mistakenly believed was Black, the papers said. The victim was in a coma for several days but survived.

At the arraignment, Forte's mother told the court that her son had been "left in the gutter to die" and now requires full-time care.

"It's the most horrible thing that's ever happened to me or my family, and it's not going to go away," Eileen Forte said.

Kamara's mother also spoke, saying, "My son was innocent. They beat him for Obama."

If convicted of the federal charges, the men each would face up to 10 years in prison.

Civil rights lawyer for Bond, Ali dies

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Charles Morgan Jr., a civil rights-era lawyer from Alabama who represented Julian Bond and Muhammad Ali and argued for the "one man, one vote" principle that redrew political maps, died Thursday. He was 78.

Family members said Morgan, known as Chuck, died at his home in Destin, Fla., of complications from Alzheimer's disease.

A native of Birmingham who fought that city's segregationist leaders in the early 1960s, Morgan opened the American Civil Liberties Union's Southern Regional office in Atlanta in 1964 and became legislative director of the ACLU's national office in Washington, D.C., in 1972.

In an Alabama reapportionment case known as Reynolds vs. Sims, he won a 1964 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that required voting districts to be equal in population, a blow to the political power of rural legislators who until then dominated the statehouse.

"It ended gerrymandering," said Richard Cohen, president of the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery. "It became a bedrock principle for voting rights. It changed the complexion of the South and the country."

The case was one of a handful that made the "one man, one vote" principle part of federal law and protected the political voice of voters in growing urban centers.

"Chuck was a true giant of the legal profession," said Cohen, who once worked for Morgan's Washington law firm. "He was a creative genius and he was relentless in his pursuit of our Constitution. He was also an incredibly brave man and eloquent man."

Morgan's legal career with the ACLU included several important civil liberties cases of the 1960s. He successfully appealed to the U.S.



CHARLES MORGAN JR.

Supreme Court in 1966 on behalf of Bond, a Black political leader who refused a seat in the Georgia House of Representatives because of a statement opposing the Vietnam War.

"He was a giant who remade the South through the courtroom as Martin Luther King remade it through marching feet," Bond, the current chairman of the NAACP's national board, said.

Morgan was part of the Ali legal team that successfully appealed to the Supreme Court after the heavyweight boxing champion was convicted of draft evasion in 1967. Ali was stripped of his world title when he cited his religious beliefs in refusing to serve in the military during the Vietnam war.

Morgan also represented high-profile anti-war defendants including Army Capt. Howard Levy, a physician court-martialed in 1967 for refusing to train Green Berets for service in Vietnam. He wrote "One Man One Voice" about his experiences from 1964 to 1976.

"He was like Forrest Gump. He intersected with all these turning points in history," said Diane McWhorter, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama — The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution."

Morgan worked with the ACLU in Washington for

several years, but left to form his own firm in 1977 after disagreements with the agency. His client list raised eyebrows among some liberals — he did legal work for former Attorney General John Mitchell, trying unsuccessfully to reduce his prison term for Watergate crimes.

He also defended Sears Roebuck & Co. against allegations of race and sex discrimination brought by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, winning a

major federal court fight for Sears against the EEOC.

A University of Alabama Law School graduate, Morgan did political battle against Eugene "Bull" Connor and Birmingham's segregationist leadership early on, condemning the city's failures in a widely reported civic club speech after a 1963 church bombing killed four Black girls. He wrote about this period in his 1964 book, "A Time To Speak."

Your Horoscope Says... Jan. 15-21

ARIES

You want a comrade who doesn't place inordinate expectations or demands on you, and who is creative, intelligent, a good conversationalist, and highly spiritual. Perhaps you should be out looking this week with eyes wide open!

Soul Affirmation: Cooperation with others is the key to success for me this week.

Lucky Numbers: 13, 24, 41

TAURUS

Work calls and you are not completely happy with current divisions of labor. Do your part as a member of the team and you'll be glad that you did. Others will notice that you are a committed team player.

Soul Affirmation: I master life by mastering myself.

Lucky Numbers: 23, 45, 48

GEMINI

Business looks good this week as you discover a new way of increasing exposure to your product. Let hope and optimism lead you into new beginnings and fresh starts. All vibes are good. Go!

Soul Affirmation: I enjoy flirting with new ideas.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 19, 27

CANCER

You seem preoccupied this week, and it's because your mind is filled with a vision of love for the entire planet. Use your gifts to assist others in seeing the world as you do, in glorious color. Check the details on paperwork that you have to do, dreamer.

Soul Affirmation: I release internal pressure by enjoying the beauties of the world around me.

Lucky Numbers: 22, 34, 55

LEO

Everybody's in a good mood this week, and you'll want to join friends or family in sharing good food and feelings. You may be asked to grow, or move. Think seriously about it, because it could enhance your spiritual growth.

Soul Affirmation: In order for money to come I must think about money as my friend.

Lucky Numbers: 45, 47, 51

VIRGO

At work, some matters have been on hold but now you will get the green light. Continue to work as diligently as you have been in the past to ensure success. Have faith that your plans are on target.

Soul Affirmation: Anticipation of a beautiful immediate future lights up my week.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 53, 54

LIBRA

Quit rushing around. You frequently help others, so why are you troubled over asking for the help you need this week? Ask, and when you receive, say, "Thank You!" You are blessed with many supportive friends.

Soul Affirmation: I smile and trust in the powers beyond myself.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 20, 44

SCORPIO

Keep all your ducks in a row this week. No mixing work with fun or business with pleasure. Save your affection for the home front and stay focused on the work in front of you on the job. Things are working out perfectly.

Soul Affirmation: This week I find joy in the gifts that life has already given me.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 8, 14

SAGITTARIUS

Why not take each perfect moment as it comes? You are struggling to find a solution that time can and will provide. Perform your tasks cheerfully this week and let the future take care of itself.

Soul Affirmation: Worry will only create more worry. I stop all worry.

Lucky Numbers: 32, 50, 51

CAPRICORN

Your anxiety about an important issue can now be seen as needless. You don't have to worry! Have faith that things are working out perfectly and they will!

Soul Affirmation: I am uplifted by the presence of friends.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 17, 22

AQUARIUS

You can be discreet, and cut down on some of the envious comments you are attracting. Or you can continue to flaunt it since you've got it. Your choice this week! Watch for a pleasant change in a romantic partner's attitude.

Soul Affirmation: The winner is me. I smile for the cameras.

Lucky Numbers: 23, 39, 43

PISCES

Center yourself at every opportunity during this busy week, and keep your quest for emotional and spiritual balance in the forefront. Make an effort to take your time; that way, you'll recognize opportunity from impulse-control problems immediately.

Soul Affirmation: My spirit gives me limitless possibilities.

Lucky Numbers: 10, 20, 31